

Data Points

CWHS

RESULTS FROM THE CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S HEALTH SURVEY

arly detection is the most effective way to prevent cervical cancer. Routine, annual pelvic exams and Pap tests can detect pre-cancerous conditions that can often be treated successfully before cancer develops. Nationally, the cervical cancer death rate fell 10% from 1991 to 1996 reflecting continued widespread use of Pap screening. 1 The American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends that women begin annual screening at age 18, or after the onset of sexual activity, whichever occurs first.² Despite the recognized benefits of a Pap test, health officials estimate that about 60-80% of American women with newly diagnosed cases of invasive cervical cancer have not had a Pap test within the past five years and many of these have never had a Pap test. These women are more likely to be elderly, African-American, and low income women.3

The California Women's Health Survey in 2000 asked women ages 18 and older if they

have ever had a Pap test and if they had, how long it has been since their last test.

In 2000, 85% of all women surveyed ages 18 and older reported they had a Pap test within the past three years, 7% within three to five years, and 8% never had a Pap test.

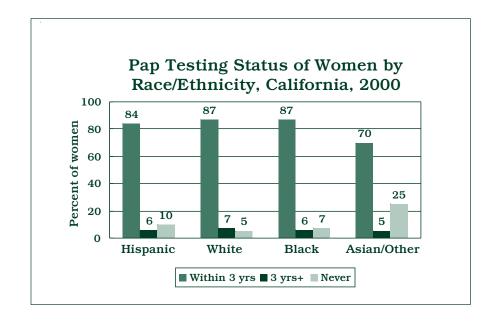
- White (87%), Black (87%), and Hispanic (83%) women were more likely than Asian/Other (70%) women to have a Pap test within the past three years.
- Asian women (25%) were more likely than the other race/ethnic groups to report never having a Pap test compared to White (5%), Black (7%), and Hispanic (10%) women (see graph).

PAP TESTING STATUS FOR WOMEN, CALIFORNIA, 2000

Office of Women's Health, California Department of Health Services

Public Health Message:

The Pap test is a highly effective and widely used screening test for cervical cancer. Many California women, particularly Asians, have never had a Pap test or have not had a Pap test in the past three years



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National Cancer Institute, Cancer Facts, 1996

² Smith RA, Mettlin CJ, Davis KJ, Eyre H., American Cancer Society Guidelines for the Early Detection of Cancer, CA Cancer J Clin 2000;50:34-49.

³ American Cancer Society, Cancer Resource Center, Internet Web Page, http://www.cancer.org.